

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS (ON AMENDED SHEETS ANNEXED TO IPER)

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (original) Edible composition comprising at least 25% by weight (based on the dry weight of the total composition) of a pectin, wherein the pectin has a degree of esterification (DE) below 50%, and at least 0.2% by weight (based on the dry weight of the total composition) of a carotenoid and/or another active ingredient.
2. (original) Composition according to claim 1, comprising at least 50% by weight (based on the dry weight of the total composition) of pectin.
3. (currently amended) Composition according to claim 1 ~~and/or 2~~, wherein the pectin has a degree of esterification (DE) between 30 and 45% and comprises between 60 and 75% of galacturonic acid units.
4. (currently amended) Composition according to ~~one or more of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, wherein the pectin is apple pectin or citrus pectin or a mixture thereof.
5. (currently amended) Composition according to ~~one or more of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1 in the form of a dry powder.
6. (currently amended) Composition according to ~~one or more of claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1, comprising at least 1% by weight (based on the dry weight of the total composition) of a carotenoid.
7. (currently amended) Composition according to ~~one or more of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, wherein the carotenoid is selected from the group consisting of lycopene, α -carotene, β -carotene, astaxanthin, canthaxanthin, zeaxanthin, lutein, and mixtures thereof, respectively.
8. (currently amended) Composition according to ~~one or more of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, further comprising 0.01-5% by weight (based on the dry weight of the total composition) of an antioxidant.

9. (original) Composition according to claim 8, wherein the antioxidant is α -tocopherol.

10. (currently amended) Composition according to ~~one or more of claims 1 to 9~~ claim 1, wherein the carotenoid is dispersed in oil at a ratio (by weight) of carotenoid : oil between 1 : 500 and 1 : 2.

11. (currently amended) Composition according to ~~one or more of claims 1 to 9~~ claim 1, wherein the carotenoid is completely or partly dissolved in oil at ratio (by weight) of carotenoid : oil between 1 : 1000 and 1 : 5.

12. (currently amended) Composition according to ~~one or more of claims 1 to 11~~ claim 1, wherein the carotenoid is encapsulated by the pectin.

13. (currently amended) Food comprising a composition according to ~~one or more of claims 1 to 12, especially according to~~ claim 12.

14. (original) Food according to claim 13, which is a fruit juice or vegetable juice, sauce/puree, (dietetic) fruit or vegetable drink or (sports) drink.

15. (original) Process for the preparation of a composition comprising a carotenoid and/or another active ingredient, which process includes the following steps:

a) prepare an aqueous suspension comprising a pectin, wherein the pectin used has a degree of esterification (DE) below 50%,

b) add a composition comprising at least 0.5% by weight (based on the dry weight of the final composition) of a carotenoid or mixture of carotenoids, and/or other active ingredient(s) and, optionally, an oil to the suspension as prepared in step a),

c) emulsify the mixture,

d) spray the emulsion as prepared in step c) into a bath of an aqueous solution of a salt of a cation of two or more valencies,

e) separate the formed microparticles from the bath and, optionally, wash the microparticles, and

f) optionally dry the microparticles obtained in step e).

16. (original) Process according to claim 15, wherein the pectin used in step a) is apple pectin or citrus pectin or a mixture thereof.

17. (currently amended) Process according to claim 15 ~~and/or 16~~, wherein the salt of the cation of two or more valencies used in step d) is selected from the group consisting of calcium, magnesium and aluminium salts.

18. (original) Process according to claim 17, wherein the salt of the cation of two or more valencies used in step d) is a calcium salt.

19. (currently amended) Composition comprising a pectin with a degree of esterification (DE) below 50% and a carotenoid and/or another ingredient obtainable by a process as claimed in ~~one or more of claims 15 to 18~~ claim 15.